



BUS BUZZ



December 2005

WE'RE BACK

I.P.T.C. (The Idaho Pupil Transportation Communicator) is back. We have been gone for a while and we would like to believe that we have been missed. Whether that is true or not, we hope you have looked forward to (and will welcome) our return. Our intent is to provide a means of keeping the Idaho pupil transportation community informed as to what is occurring in and around our state.

I was asked what I thought the beginning of the new century would be most remembered for and after a few moments thought I replied "changes". It doesn't matter where you look, what you will find is change and in most instances they are not subtle. Whether it is war and terrorism, the economy, politics, education, weather, or pupil transportation change is everywhere you look. Good, bad, or indifferent it's everywhere you turn.

Compare the changes in pupil transportation over the last twenty years. Twenty years ago it was yellow, came in either gas or diesel and would usually

get you to and from school on a regular basis. Today, well it's still yellow (unless it's an MFSAB) and it still looks somewhat the same, but that is where the resemblance pretty much ends. Now they come powered by diesel, bio-diesel, natural gas, ethanol, propane, electricity and they are working on hydrogen. They are equipped with stop arms, crossing arms, emergency windows, roof hatches, flat floors, tinted windows, white roofs, two-way communications, stereo's, noise suppression switches and seat belt cutters. Speaking of seat belts, remember when we used to say that will never happen on a school bus, they aren't safe?

Now look at Idaho in just the last five years. We now have SISBO, the Basic Bus, the Pupil Transportation Funding Cap, the Reimbursement Matrix, the Safety Busing Measuring Instrument, Student Counts and the Run Report to name a few. What has caused all of this change in the way we manage and operate pupil transportation? A lot of people will tell you it was the Legislature or the Office

or Performance Evaluations or The State board or even the Department of Education. I believe they all had a part in the changes that have taken place but I also believe that it goes beyond any group of people or government entity. I believe that as a state and an industry a lot of people started to see the inequities and the never ending rising cost of pupil transportation and decided it was time to do something more than just talk about it. There seems to be a lot of unhappy people in the pupil transportation community right now but if they hang in there we will get there and we will make it right for everyone, not just the few.

Our goal is to make sure every district is treated equally and everyone gets their fair share.

Let us not see change just for the sake of change but work together and make changes for the good of all. It's time to put the emphasis back on "our most precious cargo".

Another goal of ours is an increase in communication between SDE, districts, contractors, and dealers. We have started the process by adding a calendar of events to our website which will tell you when claims, reports and such are due, what spot inspections and cap reviews are taking place and conference information for both state and national transportation conferences. We have expanded the Transportation Supervisor's meetings before and after the Steering Committee meetings to better gather and disseminate information and are re-instituting our news letter. You will also find more pertinent information posted to our website on a more timely basis and any district transportation dept. that cannot access our website should contact our office to try and make other arrangements to receive needed information.

RM



WHO'S DOING THE TALKING

We have had some pretty significant changes in personnel since our last news letter was published. Just in case you are not aware of those changes we will bring you up to date.

The Transportation Services Section now consists of a supervisor, coordinator, financial

specialist, four regional transportation specialists, a full time

administrative assistant and a part time administrative assistant. Rodney McKnight retired from the position of supervisor (State Director) the first of October and is sorely missed. Our current roster includes: Ray Merical, Supervisor, Student Transportation - rmerical@sde.idaho.gov

Brad Jensen, Transportation Coordinator - kbjensen@sde.idaho.gov

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Special points of interest:

- Dealer of the Year
- Passing Violations
- Safety Busing
- Emmett Says Goodbye

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PASSING VIOLATIONS



As the big yellow school bus approaches the intersection of Emerald and Orchard four or five elementary school students are waiting near the curb. First the yellow lights come on. Then the school bus comes to a halt. The red lights start to flash. The stop arm goes out. The school bus driver looks at the traffic behind her and in front of her and thinks, "Will anyone try to pass?"

For over five generations motorists and school busses have been a part of the landscape. It was in 1939 that yellow became the official color of all school buses on the road, thus birthing what we know today as National School Bus Yellow (NSBY). Passing a school bus when the red lights are flashing and stop arm is out is an every day occurrence in the State of Idaho. Why is it? A lack of education to the public, and unpunished illegal act, or is it a problem that is not getting the proper attention?

The State of Idaho uses a point system for moving violations; when an individual is convicted of illegally passing a stopped school bus with the red lights flashing and the stop arm out, that individual can receive four (4) points on their driving record. Under the point system, the Idaho Transportation Department's Driver Services Section may take the following actions against you: 8-11 points (in any 12 month period) a warning letter is sent. 12-17 points (in any 12 month period) is a 30 day suspension. 18-23 points (in

any 24 month period) is a 90 day suspension, and 24 or more points (in any 36 month period) is a 6 month suspension. Judges and the Idaho Transportation Department are authorized under state statute to suspend, disqualify, deny, cancel, refuse, or revoke the license of drivers convicted of breaking certain laws, no matter what the driver's point system count. Those violations include the illegal passing of a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm out.



Though the actual number of violations and convictions in the State of Idaho are documented, many districts choose not to report the number of violations in their district to the I.S.D.E.

What can we do? We can report, document and speak out. Education for the drivers is a must. Drivers need to be ready to report this illegal activity. The State of Idaho has implemented a new law that holds the registered owner of the said vehicle involved in the crime liable for the violations, regardless of who may have been actually driving the vehicle. This is great for the school bus driver. All the driver needs to do is get the license plate number and a description of the vehicle. A description of the driver is not a requirement. If reported promptly and turned in to the authorities, we can begin to educate the public on the importance of stopping for the school bus.

JA

SAFETY BUSING

Don't forget, Safety Busing requests for the 2005 - 2006 school year are due no later than March 31, 2006. If you want the State Board to grant your requests for the reimbursement of your district's safety busing you must annually affirm that conditions of all prior approved safety busing requests are unchanged. To do so you must submit a "Request for Safety Busing Reimbursement" on or before March 31 of the school year in which the safety busing is taking place to the State Department of Education Student Transportation Section. Your local Board of Trustees shall annually, by official action, approve all safety busing locations before they are submitted for approval. School districts shall re-evaluate all safety busing sites at intervals of at least every three years using the local board adopted measuring or scoring instrument.

When submitting a safety busing request DO NOT USE the New or Previous safety busing forms. These forms are obsolete and have been replaced with the Request for Safety Busing Reimbursement form which can be found on our web site at www.sde.state.id.us/finance/transport and listed under miscellaneous forms.

THE GREAT DEBATE



The issue of whether or not to install seat belts in large school buses has been a matter of public policy debate for more than a quarter century. A handful of states and localities have enacted legislation to require the devices, but more states rejected the idea than accepted it.

Does Idaho School Buses need seatbelts? We want to know what you think. Please e-mail us your opinion at adsalazar@sde.state.id.us. Your responses will be printed in the next newsletter.

BRIGHT IDEA OF THE QUARTER



Are you having a problem keeping the emergency exit window instruction sticker on your bus?

There is a remedy to this problem. Simply cut out a template with the words "EMERGENCY EXIT" or purchase the lettering from your local bus dealer, then spray paint it on the inside of your busses. This technique would also help on the new Safety Liner school bus. You will notice that above the emer-

gency escape windows the Emergency Exit sign is virtually unreadable due to the height and angle. There is an area on the window frame just above the window that is large enough to accommodate spray painting Emergency Exit to eliminate this problem.



Thanks to Eldon Davis, Cassia Co. for this Bright Idea.



DEALER OF THE YEAR

The dealer of the year awards, which includes five regional winners and one overall winner, are presented each year to Thomas dealers who show outstanding performance in customer satisfaction, customer service and support, financial performance and overall relationship with Thomas Built Buses.

Thomas Built President and CEO John O'Leary presented the awards during the President's Club Banquet, which is part of the annual Thomas dealer meeting, held in Greensboro, N.C. in October. "Western Mountain Bus Sales combines product knowledge, sales expertise and a keen focus on customer service, which is a monumental task given the geographical challenges of their territory" said O'Leary.

EMMETT SAYS GOODBYE

Duane Sawyer passed away Oct. 29 at the age of 77. He was born Sept. 12, 1928 at home on the Emmett bench. He grew up working on the family farm and was driving trucks at the age of nine. At 15, he purchased a 1940 International school bus. He transported his classmates on this bus while attending school himself. During 1967-1983 Duane was an Emmett rural volunteer fire fighter and drove a bus for the school district. Generations of school children rode his bus over the 26 years that he drove to Emmett schools and a team bus to high school athletic events. The love we felt for him will be carried in our hearts forever. TM



WELCOME ABOARD

- ◆ Layne Howell is now the Transportation Supervisor for Fruitland School District.
- ◆ Gerald Lachcik is the Transportation Liaison for Nampa School District.
- ◆ Ted Wasco is the new Transportation Supervisor
- ◆ Jack Hurd from Murtaugh has accepted the steering committee appointment for Region IV.

"The professionalism and dedication to excellence demonstrated by our top performing dealers reflects positively on the Thomas name and we're proud to be associated with them."

Brad Carpenter, owner of Western Mountain Bus Sales, said his company was especially pleased to receive the honor. "Idaho isn't the most populous territory so it's challenging to compete in terms of sales volume with some of the large markets in the East. We're very proud of our service and our longstanding relationship with our customers."

Carpenter accepted the award along with his father and former company owner Vern Carpenter.

Western Mountain Bus Sales was established in 1972 and has been a Thomas Built dealer for nearly 25 years. It maintains a more than 50 percent market share of school buses sold in Idaho.

Thomas Built Buses is the leading manufacturer of school buses in North America, with more than one third of the school bus market in North Amer-



ica. Thomas Built Buses is a member of Freightliner LLC, the largest heavy-duty truck manufacturer in North America and a leading manufacturer of class 3-8 vehicles.

Freightliner LLC produces and markets commercial vehicles under the Freightliner, Sterling, Western Star, American LaFrance and Thomas Built Buses nameplates. Freightliner is a unit of DaimlerChrysler, the world's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer. It should make the Treasure Valley proud to have a local company awarded this prestige's award. Congratulations to the Carpenters and their entire crew for such a great job. JA

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Which Driver are you?

The Nonassertive Driver:

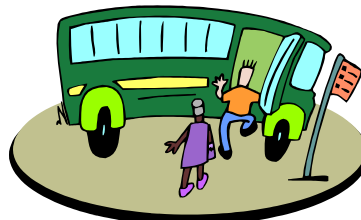
You let the students misbehave and do not know how to stop them. You back down when challenged and are afraid of the students. You frequently feel upset and overwhelmed.



The Hostile Driver: You get angry and yell at the students. You constantly threaten the students however, you never follow through with those threats. You call the students names and you use physical force. You harm the students psychologically.

The Assertive Driver: You are the boss on the bus. You say what you mean and mean what you say. You clearly and firmly tell the students exactly how you want them to behave. You stay calm and use a normal tone of voice. You have a plan of action when students do not behave. You reward students who do behave.

A special thanks to Bonneville School District #93 for your contribution.



IDAHO PUPIL TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATOR

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WHO'S DOING THE TALKING

CONTINUED

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All other contact information is avail-
able on our website at:
www.sde.state.id.us/finance/transport
along with a current calendar of events
and other student transportation infor-
mation. RM

In 1821, a two-story frame building served as the first schoolhouse for Idaho City. Seventy years later in 1891, this building was torn down and the construction of a new and much larger school house began. In July, the frame was completed, however so were the funds to finish building the school. The residents of Idaho City were determined to open the doors for the fall school term, so the three (3) trustees: John Kennaly, Charles Mann, and O.A. Duquette, each volunteered three days a week to help with the construction. The community came together and sponsored a dance which



raised \$137.95. The dance was such a success that it lasted until four o'clock in the morning. Everyone's efforts paid off, and the building was completed in late September, 1891. Grades one through four were taught downstairs and five through eight on were taught on the second level.

In a report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, dated 1865, there were four schools in Boise County with 605 students between the ages of four and twenty-one. When the present Basin School was constructed in 1963, this building became Idaho City's City Hall.

Information for this story was provided by the Idaho City Chamber of Commerce, Historical Foundation. JA



AROUND THE WORLD

The bus drivers in the Clinton Community School District of Clinton, Iowa are collecting toys for area children this holiday season. The goal of the "Toys For Our Kids" program is to fill a

school bus with toys to be distributed by the Salvation Army to children in the Gateway area as part of its Holiday Network program. The bus was scheduled to be parked outside a local Wal-Mart to accept gifts on December 10. AS



Lorenz's Law of Mechanical Repair

After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch.

RECALL CORNER

Thomas' Recall of 05V-137 involves certain Thomas MVP – ER, HD and HDX units manufactured from September 2000 through March 2004 with certain dana front axles.

The axle tie rod may crack and separate causing a vehicle crash without prior warning. If you have any questions

or concerns, please contact your Thomas Dealer.



HELP WANTED

The Post Falls School District has an immediate opening for Transportation Supervisor. The successful applicant will supervise the daily operation of the transportation program for the safe and efficient transport of approximately 2,300 students to and from school and extracurricular activities. The district has a fleet of 36 busses and has approximately 45 employees. Duties include supervision of personnel, maintenance of equipment, establishing bus routes and schedules and administration of the department budget.

Must possess strong oral and written communication skills and be skilled in the utilization of technology. Position closes December 31, 2005.

Salary range is \$42,000 to \$47,000 DOE. Please obtain an application from the Post Falls School District Office at West 206 Mullan Ave., Post Falls, ID. (208) 773-1658

